

RECTOR'S REFLECTION

It's easy to see what the theme is this week: pure religion. In the Letter of James, we read about the difference between religion that is worthless and religion that is pure and undefiled before God. Jesus also speaks about honourable versus defiled worship in his encounter with the scribes and Pharisees.

If one listens to the popular culture these days, it seems as though all religion is worthless. There are those who boldly claim "I'm spiritual, but not religious", which apparently means that they think they have a more worthwhile claim on divine matters than those who are caught up in "religion". In our highly self-centred culture, spiritual folks can take their own path towards whatever they feel is the great power of the universe without having to submit to the disciplines of a supposedly anachronistic and irrelevant institution.

And then there are those who are dead set against any kind of religion at all. Among the most militant of these are the neo-atheists, people who hurl all kinds of vitriol at spiritual *and* religious folks, but especially at those who practice their faith. These people mock those who believe in God as intellectually inferior (I mean, who other than a dimwit would believe in fairy tales and a being you cannot see?) and responsible for much, if not everything, that is wrong in the world. Ironically, at least from my perspective, these atheists are as fundamentalist as the religious fundamentalists they scorn. They decry literalism, proselytising, and unloving relationships with the world around. Funnily enough, they engage in the same practices and, moreover, much of what they fight against is a puerile caricature of Christianity and resembles not in the least the faith I follow.

It's in this context that we read these two passages from Scripture this week. The first, in the Letter of James, tells us that pure religion is more than just a set of beliefs but is faith put into action: "be doers of the word, and not merely hearers". Those who follow the path of Jesus will care for orphans and widows in their distress, and keep themselves unstained by the world. In other words, in a time when "every man for himself" was the norm, our faith asked its adherents to provide for and protect the weak. It called people to live by a different set of ethics than the rest of the world—a set of ethics that, as we discussed last week, was not based on the usual "might makes right" domination system but was rooted in the power of God's love, justice, mercy, and peace.

Then there's Jesus, who is admonished by the religious leaders because he allowed his disciples to forego the customary purification rights before eating. This was a contravention of Jewish purity codes. Jesus replied that the leaders knew all the laws (in their heads, at least) and followed through on the "religious" part, that is, the washing of hands etc., but failed to practice their faith where it really counted. We can infer from his rebuke that the leaders all did the external stuff related to their faith in order to look good when others looked at them, but where it was demanded of them to look out for the needy, they looked the other way. If James had been there, he might have said they were practicing worthless and not pure and undefiled religion.

Jesus condemns the religious folks of his day by quoting from Isaiah: "This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." His words stung the scribes and Pharisees because they had failed to live out their faith; to be doers and not just hearers. The universal message of the readings then for us who persevere in our faith today despite opposition is that we too must honour God not only with our lips but in our lives, to be not only hearers of the word but doers.



THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF TYENDINAGA

*To be a Spirit-filled and life-giving place where strangers
become friends and friends become disciples.*

SUNDAY CELEBRATION

Sunday 30 August 2015
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

9:30 a.m.

All Saints' Church, 1295 Ridge Rd

PARISH PRIEST

The Venerable Brad Smith
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QUEEN ANNE PARISH CENTRE

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Mission Statement

Our mission, for the glory of God in Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, is to:

- Celebrate all that God has done for us through worship and witness with others.
- Respond to our call to be disciples of Christ by sharing our faith, rooted in the Word of God, with others and encouraging others to become followers of Christ through word and action.
- Practice good stewardship of our human, financial and environmental resources, working to ensure that all of God's Creation is viable for future generations.
- Grow ourselves and others by reaching out to our communities, following Jesus' example of generous caring, giving, and welcoming.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Parish Council—The next meeting is Wed 2 Sep at 7 p.m. in the QAPC. Members can pick up their material today.

Evensong to Commemorate Her Majesty The Queen becoming the longest-reigning monarch in British history—Sun 13 Sep, 4:00 p.m., Christ Church. An offering will be taken to be directed to the MBQ Christ Church Utilities Fund.

Amsterdam Trip—Our visit to St Ann's will take place 18-20 Sep. Hotel reservations are made. If you need a ride, there will be car pooling available.

Friendly Manor Visitors—The next Friendly Manor visit is on Thu 24 Sep.

Food Bank Donations—We gather non-perishable food items on the first Sunday of each month and donate them to the Food Bank. The Food Bank is experiencing a significant increase in the number of families it serves so this is a material way we can help our neighbours. The next Food Bank Sunday is 4 Oct.

Harvest Thanksgiving—Sun 11 Oct.

Guitar Raffle—A raffle for the benefit of the parish is being held on 20 Dec for a BR-180 Blueridge Guitar, with case, strap, capo and picks, all of which have been generously donated by Margie Anderson (and which are valued at around \$2,000 new). It would make a wonderful Christmas gift for a musician. Tickets: \$5 ea. or 3/\$10. Margie has books of tickets if you are able to help sell them and she welcomes suggestions of places who might sell them for us. If you'd like to know more about the guitar, a review can be found here: <http://www.acousticguitar.com/Gear/Reviews/Blueridge-BR-180A-Review>.

Rectory Rental—The rectory is available for rental on a weekly basis as a cottage for tourists, fishermen, etc (and may be rented for shorter periods in the off season). Check out the website at cottagesincanada.com/bayofquinterectorycottage and please tell your friends who might need a place to stay!

The Mohawk Guild— The Mohawk Guild is a longstanding organization that is committed to the service of our community. The Guild meets at the Parish Hall (1295 Ridge Road) on the last Wed of the month at 7 p.m. Please join us in our efforts. For more information, please call Bev Hill (613-962-5183) or Shirley Maracle (613-962-6137).

PRAYERS THIS WEEK

Anglican Communion

The Most Rev'd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury
The Diocese of Sebei (Uganda)
The Rt Revd Paul Kiptoo Masaba

Diocese of Ontario

The Rt Rev'd Michael Oulton
The Parish of St. James, Kemptville
The Revd Carolyn Pollock
The Revd Robert Porter

Companions

St Ann's Episcopal Church, Amsterdam, the Very Rev'd Neal Longe
HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace, the Rev'd Canon Denis Mulliner

Parish of Tyendinaga

Greeters

Pray for the families of: Lester & Brenda Brant; Marie Brant;
Nora Brant; Pat & Harvey Brant; Pat Brant

READINGS FOR SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23
James 2:1-17

Psalms 125
Mark 7:24-37

Stewardship Reflection

Quoting the prophet Isaiah, Jesus reminds them that: "this people honours me with their lips, but their heart stays away from me." It kind of frightens me that he might be able to say the same about me!

Financial Report

Weekly Need:	\$2,459
Last week's Offering:	<u>\$1,402</u>
Shortage	\$1,057

Based on the 2015 budget and the number of identifiable givers, the following is what is required of each giver in order to meet our needs:

Weekly: \$40 Monthly: \$173